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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 29 JUNE 2025 | SUNDAY | BENGALURU | 3 MUHARRAM, 1447 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 175 | Pages: 8

Pakistan rebuilds terror camps, infra destroyed in Op Sindoor

Pak Army, ISI and govt are reportedly providing full support and funding

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Pakistan is actively rebuilding terrorist launchpads and training camps destroyed by the Indian Army during Operation Sindoor in May, launched in response to the Pahalgam terrorist attack, intelligence sources reveal.

The Pakistani Army, intelligence agency ISI, and government are reportedly providing full support and substantial funding to re-establish terror infrastructure in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and nearby regions.

On 7 May, Indian forces conducted precision strikes on nine terror camps across Pakistan and PoK, targeting key infrastructure linked to Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and Hizbul Mujahideen. Notably, the JeM headquarters in Bahawalpur, considered its operational hub, was among the primary targets.

In response, terror groups backed by ISI are constructing high-tech, mini terror camps in dense forests near the Line of Control (LoC) to avoid surveillance and future airstrikes. Camps are being rebuilt in areas such as Luni, Putwal, Taipu Post, Jamila Post, Umranwali, Chaprar, Forward Kahuta, Chota Chak, and Janglora, equipped with advanced technology to counter satellite surveillance, foliage-penetrating radar, and thermal imaging.

Thirteen launchpads in PoK are also being redeveloped, including in Kel, Shardi, Dudhniyal, Athmuqam, Jura, Leepa Valley, Tandpani, and Chakoti. Additionally, four launchpads on the International Border, dismantled during Operation Sindoor, are being reactivated, including Masrur Bada Bhai, Chaprar, Luni, and a drone centre in Shakargarh.

The ISI's new strategy involves decentralising large camps into smaller, better-secured units, guarded by trained Pakistani Army personnel equipped with thermal sensors and anti-drone technology.

Intelligence has also flagged a high-level meeting in Bahawalpur involving senior commanders of JeM, LeT, Hizbul Mujahideen, and The Resistance Front (TRF) — the group behind the April 22 Pahalgam attack, which killed 26 civilians. ISI reportedly pledged fresh funding and manpower to rebuild and expand terror operations. *—Agencies*

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One of the most significant targets of Operation Sindoor was the JeM headquarters in Bahawalpur ***PHOTO: PTI***

PARAG JAIN APPOINTED NEW RAW CHIEF

New Delhi, 29 June

Parag Jain, one of the brains behind the meticulous planning of 'Operation Sindoor', has been appointed as the new Chief of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), according to an official order issued here on Saturday.

The two-year tenure of Jain, an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the 1989 batch of the Punjab cadre, officially begins on 1 July. He takes over from Ravi Sinha, who retires on 30 June.

The decision to appoint Jain as chief of the external intelligence agency was made by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet earlier this week, officials said.

—PTI

>>>More on Page 3

India imposes curbs on import of jute from B'desh

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

India has imposed restrictions with immediate effect on the import of jute and allied fibre products from Bangladesh, a move that came amid increasing strain in the overall relations between the two neighbours.

The new restrictions will apply to imports into India of Bangladesh's jute and allied fibre products across all land and seaports, with the exception of the Nhava Sheva seaport in Maharashtra.

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade under the Union Ministry of Commerce issued a notification on 27 June imposing the restrictions.

Under South Asian Free Trade Area provisions, jute from Bangladesh enjoys a duty free access to India.

However, the Indian jute industry suffered due to the adverse impact of dumped and subsidised imports of jute products, particularly yarn, fibre and bags from the neighbouring country. The Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD) conducted detailed investigations and imposed anti-dumping duty (ADD) on jute and goods originating from Bangladesh. *—PTI*

World's first space hotel to launch in 2027

Space tourism is moving from science fiction to reality with Voyager Station, the world's first space hotel, set to open in 2027. Developed by Above Space, the 1,25,000 sq ft rotating facility will host 280 guests and 112 crew. It will offer restaurants, bars, a cinema, gym, and luxury villas.

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Woman, lover murder husband in Tumakuru

BENGALURU 28 JUNE

AIn a chilling case from Kadashettihalli village, Tumakuru district, Karnataka, a woman and her lover allegedly murdered her husband and dumped his body 30 km away. On June 24, Sumangala, a hostel cook, and Nagaraju, her alleged lover, killed 50-year-old Shankaramurthy, who lived alone on a farm. Police said Sumangala attacked him with chilli powder and a club before suffocating him. They stuffed his body in a sack and dumped it in a well in Turuvekere taluk. A missing persons report and mobile call records led to Sumangala's confession. A case is registered at Nonavinakere police station. *—Agencies*

5-member SIT to probe Kolkata gangrape

KOLKATA, 28 JUNE

Kolkata Police have formed a five-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the alleged gang rape of a 24-year-old student at South Calcutta Law College. The SIT, led by an Assistant Commissioner, began its investigation on Saturday. The student has accused three individuals — two seniors and an alumnus of raping her inside the college guard's room on 25 June. Following her complaint, police arrested the main accused, Manojit Mishra, along with Promit Mukherjee and Zaid Ahmed. The college guard was also arrested on Saturday morning for allegedly aiding the crime. Authorities say the SIT will explore all angles. *—PTI*

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Art 370 was against Ambedkar's idea of 1 Constitution: CJI

NAGPUR, 28 JUNE

Chief Justice of India BR Gavai on Saturday said Dr BR Ambedkar envisioned a single Constitution to ensure India's unity and never supported the idea of separate constitutions for individual states. Speaking at the inauguration of the Constitution Preamble Park, where a statue of Ambedkar was unveiled, the CJI recalled his vision while referring to the Supreme Court's unanimous verdict upholding the abrogation of Article 370, which had granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Gavai, who was part of the five-judge bench, stated that Ambedkar believed one Constitution was essential for national unity, especially during times of crisis. *—PTI*

B'LURU STAMPEDE

Centre approves suspension of 3 cops

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

The central government has approved the suspension of three IPS officers in connection with the Chinnaswamy Stadium stampede case that claimed 11 lives and injured many others.

The suspension was approved after the Karnataka government initiated disciplinary action against officers, Dayananda, Vikas Kumar and Shekhar for dereliction of duty in handling the crowd during the victory celebrations of the Royal Challengers Bengaluru team in Indian Premier League, 2025, held at the stadium.

The state government was asked to issue a charge sheet against the officers within 30 days.

During a police department review meeting, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah expressed shock over the delayed response to the incident, calling it unprecedented in his political career. He said he never saw such delayed response in case of a stampede.

The chief minister also questioned the role of the Intelligence Department if it could not provide comprehensive information on time. The failure resulted in the untimely death of 11 people.

"We were not given the correct information. Even when I inquired at 5:45 p.m., I was told only one person had died. But by then, 11 people had already died. If the senior officials had given me accurate information promptly, I could have instructed cancellation of the RCB's celebration event in the Chhinaswamy stadium," the Chief Minister said. Though he regretted the suspension of the three senior officials, it was necessary as it was a clear failure on their part. *—Agencies*

DNA test identifies last 260th victim of AI crash

AHMEDABAD, 28 JUNE

Two weeks following the devastating plane crash in Ahmedabad, the identity of the last victim has now been confirmed through DNA testing, bringing the total death toll to 260, officials announced on Saturday.

The remains of the final victim were handed over to their family, as confirmed by Dr Rakesh Joshi, Superintendent of Ahmedabad Civil Hospital. Preliminary reports had suggested a higher toll of 270 fatalities.

The tragic incident occurred on 12 June, when a London-bound Air India flight crashed into a hostel complex in Meghaninagar shortly after departing from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport. In total, 241 individuals aboard the flight lost their lives, alongside 19 people on the ground. Remarkably, a 40-year-old British national, Vishwas Kumar Ramesh, emerged as the sole survivor.

Dr Joshi stated that the DNA matching process for the final victim's remains concluded on Friday, allowing for the identification of all 260 victims. Notably, 240 of the deceased were identified prior, leaving one body pending which has now been resolved. Ongoing treatment continues for three individuals who sustained injuries during the crash.

Of those who died, 200 were Indian, which included 181 passengers and 19 individuals on the ground. Additionally, the tragedy claimed the lives of seven Portuguese nationals, 52 British nationals, and one Canadian. The intricate DNA matching procedures, often time-consuming due to the severity of the victims' conditions, were completed in an expedited manner, reflecting the efforts made by medical authorities. *—PTI*

India looks grand from space: Shuka to PM

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday spoke to Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla of the Indian Air Force, who scripted history by becoming the first Indian to enter the International Space Station (ISS) and the second to go to space after astronaut Rakesh Sharma.

"…you are the closest to the hearts of Indians…Aapke naam mein bhi shubh hai aur aapki yatra naye yug ka shubharambh bhi hai," PM Modi told the Indian astronaut.

Shukla, who carried the national flag with him, replied, "It is not my journey alone, but also our country's." Narrating his experience, Shukla said, that they flew over Hawaii and witnessed sunrise and sunset 16 times a day. Absence of gravity made falling asleep tough.

PM Narendra Modi interactes with Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, who is aboard the International Space Station on Saturday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Sharing his first thought on reaching space, the Indian astronaut said "no border is visible", and that India looked "very grand, very big."

The four astronauts were welcomed aboard ISS on 26 June with warm hugs and handshakes by the seven-member crew after the docking of their Dragon spacecraft, 'Grace' at the end of a 28-hour journey around the earth. "I am astronaut 634. It is a privilege to be here," Mr Shukla said. The astronauts will conduct scientific experiments and interact with people on earth during their 14-day stay in space. *—Agencies*

Wholly untenable: SC on detention of student under NSA

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

The Supreme Court of India has ordered the immediate release of a law student from Madhya Pradesh who was detained under the National Security Act (NSA), calling the preventive detention "wholly untenable".

A bench comprising Justices Ujjal Bhuyan and K Vinod Chandran questioned the basis of the initial detention order dated 11 July, 2024, issued by the District Magistrate of Betul. The student, Annu alias Aniket, had been arrested following an altercation with a professor on a university campus and was facing charges including attempted murder. While in custody, an NSA detention order was issued and subsequently extended at three-month intervals.

The Court noted serious procedural lapses, including the fact that Annu's representation was not forwarded to the state government, but instead was dealt with by the same District Magistrate who issued the detention. It also questioned the necessity of preventive detention when the student was already in judicial custody and had been granted bail in the main case earlier this year.

Although the state cited nine criminal cases against Annu, the Court was informed that he had been acquitted in five and fined in one, with two others still pending. *—PTI*

Tigress found dead in Bandipur

CHAMARAJANAGAR, 28 JUNE

A five-year-old tigress has been found dead in the Gundre forest range within the Bandipur Tiger Reserve, forest officials confirmed on Saturday.

The carcass was discovered by forest department staff on Thursday evening during a routine patrol.

A post-mortem examination conducted on Friday concluded that the tigress had died of natural causes, specifically due to starvation following injuries sustained in a territorial fight. *—PTI*

ACT OF 'REVENGE'

3 arrested for 'poisoning' tigress, 4 cubs

CHAMARAJANAGAR, 28 JUNE

The poisoning deaths of a tigress and her four cubs in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar district have been traced to a suspected act of revenge by a local man whose cow was preyed upon by wild animals, forest officials said on Saturday.

Three men, including the cow's owner, were arrested in connection with the incident, which occurred in the Hugyam forest range of the Male Mahadeshwara Hills. The deaths, reported on Thursday, triggered widespread outrage across the state.

Investigations revealed that the wild cats had consumed the poisoned carcass of a cow. Forest authorities identified the owner as Maada alias Maaduraju, who was reportedly enraged after his cow, Kenchi, was killed by wild animals. In retaliation, he allegedly sprayed poison on the cow's carcass.

A tigress, which fed on the poisoned remains, returned with her four cubs for a second meal. All five big cats died shortly after consuming the tainted flesh. Maaduraju's associates, Konappa and Nagaraju, are believed to have aided in the conspiracy. The breakthrough came when officials found the poisoned cow's carcass, leading to the trio's arrest. They are currently being interrogated at Aranya Bhavan in Meenyam, Hanuru Taluk. During the probe, Maaduraju's father, Shivanna, approached police claiming responsibility, but was released after further investigation revealed his son's involvement. *—PTI*

CESC postpones smart meters fittings to 15 July

MYSURU, 28 JUNE

The Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation (CESC), Mysuru postponed the installation of smart meters to all those seeking new electricity connections to 15 July. A decision was taken at the customer's meet organised to educate the public about smart meters held at General Manager of IT Wing CESC Ramaswamy's office in Vijayanagar, on Saturday. Addressing the meeting, Ramaswamy announced the decision, postponing the instillation of smart meters from 1 July to 15 July. Consumers applying for new connections must purchase smart meters from authorised retail outlets at rates prescribed by CESC and complete the connection process accordingly. It is compulsory for new power consumers to install smart meters at their own cost. *—Salar News*

Govt conducting surveys to start LGBTQ+ schemes

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

A survey of transgenders across the State is being done to help the government implement Karnataka State Policy on Transgenders, formulated in 2017, said Mahesh Babu, Managing Director of the Karnataka State Women's Development Corporation (KSWDC) on Saturday. The survey aims to gather information about the community's demographics, socio-economic conditions, and needs to help the government allocate resources for their welfare, he said. According to him, it will cover all categories of transgenders, including Jogappas, Jogtas, Hijras, Kothis, Shivshakthis, and Aravanis, as well as intersex people, and those transitioning from female to male or male to female. "Once we get the data of transgender community from across Karnataka, we will do what it takes to tackle the larger issues that the community faces, so that the development is not served in piecemeal," said Babu. The survey was piloted in Vijayapura and Mysuru districts between 10 March and 24 April, he added. *—PTI*

PHOTO: SALAR

KSBDB head briefs CM on proposed bioenergy policy

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

Karnataka State Bioenergy Development Board (KSBDB) Chairman SE Sudheendra met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday at Vidhana Soudha to submit the performance report of 1-year of service as a Chairman of KSBDB. Sudheendra briefed the CM about the proposed Karnataka State New Bioenergy Policy, which aims to bring a new dimension for the bioenergy sector. It will create a conducive atmosphere for the investors, he said, expressing confidence that it bring more than Rs 1 lakh crore investment in the next 5 years. Board officials, advisors and other officials were present during the meeting. *—Salar News*

Engineering seats in 3 pvt City colleges are bought: ED

Says there's an extensive network of agents across India

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday alleged that admission of students through the management quota in three City-based private colleges was being done in an "opaque" manner using money, including funds in cash.

The federal probe agency's statement comes after they conducted searches at 17 locations on 25-26 June in a "seat blocking scam" case.

The raids were carried out at the premises of BMS College of Engineering, Akash Institute of Engineering and Technology, and New Horizon College of Engineering, along with those associated with these institutions, the agency said in a statement.

During the searches, a total of Rs 1.37 crore in cash was allegedly seized. However, the ED did not specify the source of the recovered funds. The searches revealed "evidence" of "widespread" seat blocking and the use of cash/money in the admission process for popular professional courses in the institutes, it said.

The agency alleged that the admission for management quota seats was mostly done in an opaque manner based on extraneous considerations such as cash or money.

A few entities engaged in educational consultancy services and some private agents were also raided.

The ED case stems from a Karnataka Police FIR registered by the KEA (Karnataka Examination Authority) against these colleges.

The complaint alleged that these colleges colluded with unknown individuals to acquire the login credentials of students registered with the KEA and subsequently blocked seats in their name for students who did not intend to enroll, the ED said.

"There is an extensive network of agents, educational consultancy service entities, which is used to bring students for admission from across India to these institutes," the statement said. *—PTI*

SYNCHRONISING PATHS

Gandhian ideals to find place in Dasara tableaux: CM

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

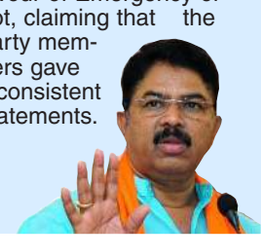
With this year's Vijayadashami coinciding with Gandhi Jayanthi, State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday directed officials that tableaux prepared for the Mysuru Dasara celebrations must reflect Mahatma Gandhi's ideals. He said Gandhi's philosophy should be suitably represented alongside the government's welfare schemes and achievements.

"This year Dasara is falling on Gandhi Jayanti on 2 October. So I have instructed officials that Dasara should be celebrated in a manner that makes Gandhi Jayanthi meaningful. Especially the tableaux should reflect Gandhi's ideals," he said after a high-level committee meeting at Vidhana Soudha on the preparations for Dasara-2025.

He asked departments to plan meaningful exhibitions and displays to showcase government initiatives and guarantee schemes. *—PTI*

Ashoka says CM will be changed before Dasara

Opposition leader R Ashoka predicted that Congress would replace CM Siddaramaiah before the Dasara celebrations. He also condemned Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge for saying India was under an "undeclared emergency" under the Modi regime, in response to the BJP's campaign during the 50th anniversary of Emergency. Ashoka asked Congress leaders to first clarify whether they are in favour of Emergency or not, claiming that the party members gave inconsistent statements.



Nandini ranks 4th among Indian food, beverage brands in 2025

Bengaluru, 28 June

- In the Food and Beverages category, Nandini has retained its fourth position, standing alongside leading brands such as Amul (1st), Mother Dairy (2nd), Britannia (3rd) and Dabur (5th).

Karnataka Milk Federation's (KMF) brand Nandini has retained fourth position in the food and beverages category alongside leading brands in India, according to the 2025 rankings released by Brand Finance, the world's leading brand valuation consultancy.

"In its latest report, Nandini has demonstrated remarkable progress, climbing from 43 in 2024 to 38 in 2025 among the Top 100 Most Valuable Indian Brands. The brand's valuation rose to USD 1,079 million, reflecting an impressive increase of USD 139 million in brand value over the previous year," KMF said in a statement.

According to KMF, in the Food and Beverages category, Nandini has retained its fourth position, standing alongside leading brands such as Amul (1st), Mother Dairy (2nd), Britannia (3rd) and Dabur (5th).

A brand value ranking is a comprehensive list that measures the monetary worth of brands using a combination of valuation methodologies. It reflects factors such as brand strength, customer loyalty, market share, and overall brand equity. High rankings signify strong brand perception, consistent performance, and a solid market presence, it stated.

"We extend our sincere gratitude to our valued consumers, dedicated farmers, trusted partners, and committed teams," B Shivaswamy, Managing Director, KMF stated.

Headquartered in London and operating in over 25 countries, Brand Finance conducts more than 6,000 brand valuations annually, supported by original market research and over 100 sector-specific reports. *—PTI*

CRIES FOR PEACE

Members of Left Parties Joint Committee protest against Israel's war in Gaza, at Freedom Park in Bengaluru, on Saturday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Mob assaults man in moral policing case in Kalaburagi

KALABURAGI, 28 JUNE

In an incident of moral policing, a young man in Kalaburagi has been attacked for giving a lift to a young woman of another community on his bike.

The incident occurred on 26 June when the victim, Bylappa, who works as a nurse in a private hospital, was on his way to drop a Muslim woman colleague on his bike. A group of 15 Muslim youths blocked the way and brutally attacked the young man, a Hindu for carrying the woman on his vehicle.

A case was registered in the MB Nagar Police Station. They police arrested six of those involved in the attack. The arrested youths were identified as Mohammed Salman, Mohammed Adil, Mohammed Rehan, Mohammed Uzair, Mohammed Faiz, and Mohammed Asif. *—Salar News*

State to set up separate ministry for small scale industries: DKS

DABASPET, 28 JUNE

Deputy CM DK Shivakumar and others inaugurate a KASSIA Centre at the Dabaspet industrial area on Saturday
PHOTO: PTI

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that a separate ministry would be set for small scale industries as per the directions of the Chief Minister.

"I have given necessary directions to the Labour Minister after discussing the issue with the CM," he said, speaking on the sidelines of an event organised to inaugurate an exhibition by Karnataka Small Scale Industry Association (KASSIA).

"Many other states have very attractive policies for small scale industries but they don't have quality talent. We are starting a new training centre for small scale industries. The government is with you and KASSIA," he added.

"There is a rule that 20 per cent of the grants from Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) must be ear-marked for small scale industries. I will discuss this with Industries Minister MB Patil and in the Cabinet meeting.

We need to focus on the small scale industries more," he added.

"KASSIA needs to put more pressure on the government to do more for them. The Centre has announced that banks will lend more to small scale industries but in reality the banks are not lending any money to small scale industries. Banks are biased towards more established businesses," he said.

He urged KASSIA office-bearers to actively work towards empowering the next generation. "Where there is competition, there is quality," he said. *—PTI*

Cong workers protesting in front of BJP office detained

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

TSeveral Congress workers were taken into preventive custody on Saturday when they gathered outside the BJP headquarters here to protest against insulting former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the name of events condemning the Emergency.

As soon as the Congress workers assembled outside the BJP headquarters in Malleswaram, they were removed from the spot and taken in police vans. At least 20 of them were taken into preventive custody, a senior police officer said.

The protest comes just days after an FIR was registered against the State BJP's social media handle over an alleged post put up by the party comparing Indira Gandhi to Adolf Hitler. *—PTI*

Congress Women Wing President Sowmya Reddy and others protest against BJP for comparing Indira Gandhi to Adolf Hitler, in front of the KPCC office in Bengaluru on Saturday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

IN A 1ST, GARUDA FORCE & GORKHA RIFLES CONDUCT MOCK DRILL IN CITY

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

In a step towards strengthening national counter-terrorism preparedness, a joint mock drill was conducted on Saturday by the Garuda Force - the counter-terrorism task force of the State Police and the 4/8 Gorkha Rifles of the Indian Army.

Officials said the exercise, conducted under the command of the Trivandrum Brigade, took place at a high-security, undisclosed location in the Bengaluru region.

"This marks the first time both forces have trained together under a unified operational umbrella. The drill was conducted as part of the Mutual Aid Scheme under the Garrison Commander of the Banaswadi Military Garrison and involved key stakeholders, including the State Police, Traffic Police, City SWAT, Bomb Disposal Team, Fire and Emergency Services and the District Medical Health Team," the Defence PRO said in a statement.

The objective was to synchronise, harmonise and synergise multi-agency response to terror threats. *—PTI*

BLACK MAGIC

City dog strangled by owner in tantric ritual

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

In a bizarre and horrific incident, a woman allegedly killed one of her three pet dogs as part of a suspected black magic ritual at an apartment in Chinnappa Layout's Acme Bellat complex, in the City. The incident came to light after the residents living nearby informed civic officials of a strong stench coming from the apartment.

The accused, Triparna Paik, a native of West Bengal, reportedly strangled her Labrador and cut its neck, four days ago. She then wrapped the body in cloth and left inside the apartment, sealing all the windows and the doors. Residents began noticing a foul stench spreading throughout the building, prompting them to alert Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) officials.

When the officials and entered the apartment, they discovered the decomposed body of the dog.

The officials found several black magic symbols at the scene. Notably, a Sri Yantra (a mystical diagram used in tantric rituals) had been drawn around the dog's body, with religious photos placed around the room and signs of puja being conducted.

A post-mortem report of the dog confirmed that it had been killed approximately four days ago. A case was registered at Mahadevapura Police Station.

Investigations are ongoing to determine the exact motive behind the horrific incident.

The other two dogs were found tied to the wall.

"The dogs are undergoing treatment at the BMP hospital," the complainant, Dr Rudresh Kumar, said.

This shocking incident has sparked outrage among animal lovers and raised serious questions about pet safety. *—Salar News*

Surya welcomes approval for NIMHANS Centre near KIA

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya welcomed the Union Government's approval for a 300-bed polytrauma unit of the NIMHANS near the Kempegowda International Airport, calling it a significant step in providing lifesaving and emergency critical care to accident victims.

The Department of Expenditure in the Ministry of Finance, accorded in-principle approval on Friday for the construction of the centre at Kyalasanahalli at a cost of Rs 498 crore.

"At present, there's no other public facility catering to such trauma cases in the vicinity," Surya said. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: ANI

Search operation for JeM terrorists enters third day

JAMMU, 28 JUNE

The search operation to track three Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorists in the Basantgarh region of Jammu and Kashmir has entered its third day, bolstered by enhanced aerial surveillance. A joint team of security forces has established a multi-tier cordon following an encounter on Thursday that resulted in the death of Haider alias Jabbar, the group's commander. The remaining three terrorists are reportedly still trapped in the densely forested area. Inspector General of Police Bhim Sen Tuti stated that additional reinforcements have been deployed to neutralise the threat. The search has led to the recovery of ammunition, explosives, and cash, underscoring the ongoing terrorist infiltration that the region has faced historically. *—PTI*

Four people held in Kaliganj bomb explosion case

KOLKATA, 28 JUNE

Police have detained four individuals, including two primary suspects, in connection with the bomb explosion that resulted in the tragic death of 13-year-old Tamanna Khatun in Kaliganj, Nadia district. The arrests occurred during raids on Friday night, with the suspects apprehended in Berhampore and Katwa. The accused, Rahibul Sheikh and Nabab Sheikh, among others, have been charged under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including rioting and culpable homicide. The incident, which took place during a premature Trinamool Congress victory rally on 23 June, has raised significant concerns regarding public safety. Earlier, five other individuals were also arrested, revealing a broader network of involvement in the case. *—PTI*

Ex-SIMI head dies after brain haemorrhage

MUMBAI, 28 JUNE

Saquib Nachan, a former office-bearer of the banned Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and an accused in Pune ISIS module case, died in a Delhi hospital on Saturday aged 67. He was admitted on 24 June after suffering a brain haemorrhage while lodged in Tihar Jail. Nachan, a resident of Padgha in Maharashtra's Thane district, was convicted for 2002-03 Mumbai blasts and later arrested in 2023 by NIA for allegedly promoting ISIS activities and training individuals in IED use. Security has been tightened in Padgha and Bhiwandi ahead of his funeral on Sunday. Authorities say he declared his village a "liberated zone" for anti-national activities. *—PTI*

Religious sites free of loudspeakers: Mumbai police

MUMBAI, 28 JUNE

Commissioner Deven Bharti on Saturday asserted that the city is now entirely free of directional loudspeakers after its personnel successfully completed a comprehensive crackdown on public address systems at all religious structures. The police commissioner, refuting claims of selective targeting, made it clear that religious structures of a particular community had not been singled out and stressed that the operation was conducted methodically, in line with the Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's directive for proper and non-arbitrary action. This action follows an order issued by the Bombay High Court in January this year, in which the police were directed to take prompt action against loudspeakers violating noise pollution norms and rules. *—PTI*

Pak hails The Hague ruling on Indus Treaty, India fumes

India says it never accepted any framework for dispute resolution

ISLAMABAD, 28 JUNE

India has never recognised the proceedings at the Permanent Court of Arbitration after Pakistan raised objections to certain design elements of the two projects under the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty **PHOTO: PTI**

Pakistan on Saturday welcomed the ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague over two hydroelectric projects in Jammu and Kashmir and indicated its readiness for talks with India on issues relating to Indus Waters Treaty.

The "high priority", at this point, is that "India and Pakistan find a way back to a meaningful dialogue, including on the application of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)," Pakistan said in a statement released early on Saturday.

India on Friday strongly rejected the ruling saying it has never recognised the so-called framework for dispute resolution with Pakistan.

India rejects this so-called "supplemental award", the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said, referring to the ruling in the case related to Pakistan's objections to Kishenganga and Ratle hydropower projects.

In its ruling, the Court of Arbitration said India's decision in April to keep the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance "does not limit" its competence over the dispute and that its ruling is binding on the parties. However, India has never recognised the proceedings at the Permanent Court of Arbitration after Pakistan raised objections to certain design elements of the two projects under the provisions of Indus Waters Treaty.

On the other hand, Pakistan called the ruling a "major legal win" emphasising that it is a "clear message that India cannot unilaterally suspend or sideline the treaty."

The MEA said India's position has all along been that the constitution of this so-called arbitral body is in itself a serious breach of the Indus Waters Treaty and consequently any proceedings before this forum and any award or decision taken by it are also illegal for that reason. *—PTI*

Op Sindoor mastermind Parag Jain to head RAW

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Parag Jain **PHOTO: PTI**

Parag Jain, an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the 1989 batch of the Punjab cadre, and one of the brains behind the meticulous planning of "Operation Sindoor", has been appointed as the new Chief of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), according to an official order issued here on Saturday.

Jain was the head of the Aviation Research Centre, an organisation that deals with aerial surveillance, SIGINT operations, photo reconnaissance flights (PHOTINT), monitoring of borders and imagery intelligence (IMINT).

Jain is known for his exceptional expertise in integrating both human intelligence (HUMINT) and technical intelligence (TECHINT) and is widely credited as the mastermind behind the planning of "Operation Sindoor", providing intelligence support that enabled the armed forces to execute precise strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Jain also brings extensive experience in addressing neighbourhood challenges and issues related to Khalistan terror groups. He played a crucial role in Jammu and Kashmir during the 2019 reorganisation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Throughout his career, Jain has held several significant positions. He was promoted to the rank of Director General of Police (DGP) in Punjab on 1 January, 2021, though he was on central deputation.

His career includes significant operational contributions during the height of terrorism in Punjab, where he served as SSP and Deputy Inspector General of Police in various districts.

Jain has also served in Indian Missions in Sri Lanka and Canada. During his tenure in Canada, he monitored Khalistan terror modules operating from the soil of that country. *—PTI*

Booth Level Officer (BLO) hands over an enumeration form to an elderly voter as part of the special intensive revision of electoral rolls, ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections. **PHOTO: PTI**

EC revises electoral rolls in Bihar, says only Indians can vote

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

The Election Commission (EC) has commenced an intensive revision of the electoral rolls in Bihar, emphasising that only Indian citizens, as defined under Article 326 of the Constitution, are eligible to vote. This initiative has sparked criticism from opposition parties, who argue it could lead to the exclusion of eligible voters through state machinery manipulation.

The EC's statement comes amidst accusations from the Trinamool Congress (TMC), which claims the revision is a covert attempt to implement the National Register of Citizens (NRC). TMC leader Derek O'Brien questioned the timing of the drive, suggesting it was influenced by recent internal BJP surveys predicting significant electoral gains in various states. He labelled the revision a "sinister move" and indicated that the INDIA coalition would challenge this initiative both inside and outside Parliament.

The special review, focusing on verifying voters' eligibility and identifying illegal foreign migrants, is set to extend to five other states preparing for elections in 2026. The EC has already engaged approximately 78,000 booth-level officers and will employ over 20,000 additional personnel to facilitate the process. More than 100,000 volunteers will provide assistance to vulnerable groups during the verification.

Opposition parties, including the Communist Party of India (Marxist), have expressed concerns over the implications of this exercise, claiming it shifts unwarranted responsibility onto voters themselves. The EC aims for a transparent revision process, but the political ramifications and accusations of bias remain contentious. *—PTI*

Preamble 'not changeable' but altered in Emergency: Dhankhar

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Vice President **Jagdeep Dhankhar** has asserted that the Preamble of the Indian Constitution is "not changeable," emphasising its fundamental role as the "seed" from which the entire document grows.

Speaking at a book launch event, he noted that no other country's constitution has seen changes to its preamble, although India's was amended by the 42nd Constitution (Amendment) Act of 1976, which added words "socialist," "secular," & "integrity."

His remarks came as the RSS called for a review of terms "socialist" and "secular," arguing they were included during Emergency period. The terms were not part of Ambedkar's original draft. The Congress and other opposition parties have described the RSS's push as "political opportunism" and an "assault" on the Constitution's essence.

- His remarks came as RSS called for a review of terms "socialist" and "secular," arguing they were included during Emergency period.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh and senior BJP leaders defended the RSS stance, insisting that, among right-thinking citizens, there is consensus that these terms were not part of the original Constitution drafted by BR Ambedkar. An article in an RSS-linked publication claimed the intent was to restore the Constitution's "original spirit," rather than dismantle it. *—PTI*

AI PROBE: AAIB DG GETS VIP SECURITY

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Union government has extended an armed security cover to GVG Yugandhar, director general of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, who is leading probe into Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad.

Commandos of the Central Reserve Police Force took over the charge of his X-category security sometime back based on a Union Home Ministry order, a source said.

The security cover was provided to the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) director general following a threat perception report prepared by central intelligence agencies.

Yugandhar is leading a team that is investigating the 12 June crash of the Ahmedabad-London Air India flight. *—PTI*

TEA-TIME COMPANION

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee was seen feeding a monkey biscuits near Digha beach, creating a viral social media moment. Captioned 'When tea by the sea leads to an unspoken bond,' the post has garnered over 20,000 likes. Banerjee is in Digha for the Jagannath Rath Yatra **PHOTO: PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/MAMATA BANERJEE**

Efforts on to restore govt in Manipur: Biren

IMPHAL, 28 JUNE

Former Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh has said efforts are underway to restore a popular government in the state, currently under President's Rule. Speaking at BJP state headquarters, Singh expressed hope that the situation would soon allow for a new administration.

"We are working to form a government at the earliest. Everyone wants peace, and BJP, as a national party, is committed to this," he said.

Singh added that inter-community violence has subsided over the past eight months, and the focus remains on reconciliation and stability. He pointed to growing national awareness around the issues of illegal immigration & drug cartels, which he says have affected entire North East.

BJP Manipur president Adhikarimayum Sharda Devi echoed his views at a book release event, stressing that current priority is peace, not elections. *—PTI*

BPCL blames rain as water-mixed fuel halts CM's convoy

BHOPAL/RATLAM, 28 JUNE

After the vehicles in Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's convoy stopped working as water-mixed fuel was filled in them, the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) on Saturday said "unusual heavy rainfall" caused water to enter fuel storage tanks at its petrol pump in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam.

The samples of fuel from the petrol pump were collected and sent for testing.

On 26 June, soon after refuelling at the Shakti Fuels petrol pump at Dosigaon in Ratlam, all vehicles in the CM's convoy broke down and they had to be pushed and parked on the side of the road.

The administration arranged new vehicles from Indore and also sealed the petrol pump.

In a statement, the BPCL said that it regreted the inconvenience caused to customers by an isolated incident of presence of water in the diesel tank at its fuel station. Preliminary inspections conducted by government officials revealed water in the underground High-Speed Diesel tank due to rains.

In contrast, the petrol tank remained unaffected. *—PTI*

- The administration arranged new vehicles from Indore and also sealed the petrol pump.

'PERFORM AT HIS OWN RISK'

Kamra's 'Delhi tourism tagline' retort to CM's barb

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra, at the centre of a massive row over his recent "gaddar" remark aimed at Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, has now hit back at Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, who had warned him about performing in the national capital "at his own risk."

The Delhi CM, speaking at an event organised by The Indian Express, was asked whether she would let comedians like Kamra perform in Delhi, where he might make jokes about the Prime Minister and other politically linked people.

Gupta replied stating, "He can come at his own risk. People of Delhi would listen to him."

When questioned about her warning that Kamra could perform in Delhi "at his own risk" rather than under her assurance, Gupta responded, "Right, you come, I will welcome you."

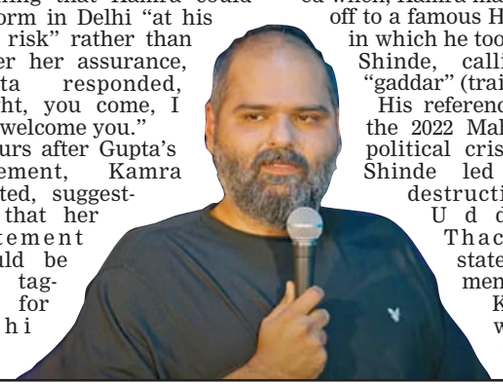
Hours after Gupta's statement, Kamra reacted, suggesting that her statement should be the tagline for Delhi Tourism.

Kamra said on X, "'Come at your own risk' should be a tagline for Delhi Tourism."

The Kunal Kamra row started when, Kamra made a spin-off to a famous Hindi song in which he took a dig at Shinde, calling him "gaddar" (traitor).

His reference was to the 2022 Maharashtra political crisis where Shinde led to the destruction of Uddhav Thackeray's state government.

Kamra was charged with three separate cases at the Khar police station, in which the Mayor of Jalgaon city lodged one and a second by a hotelier from Nashik and a third businessman from Nashik, Mumbai Police said. *—Agencies*



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Kerala min calls Bharat Mata portrait 'religious image'

KOZHIKODE/ KOCHI, 28 JUNE

Kerala's General Education Minister, V Sivankutty, on Saturday strongly criticised Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar for displaying a Bharat Mata portrait during official functions at Raj Bhavan, calling it a "blatant violation" of constitutional values.

Addressing a press conference, Sivankutty described the image—depicting a woman holding a saffron flag—as a religious symbol.

He argued that individuals holding constitutional positions are prohibited from promoting religious imagery during official events, and that such actions breach the principle of state neutrality in religious matters, as enshrined in the Constitution.

Meanwhile, Kerala's Culture Minister, Saji Cherian, on Saturday criticised BJP-led central government for allegedly curbing creative freedom, following denial of certifica-tion to the Malayalam film Janaki Vs State of Kerala (JSK).

He noted that despite BJP Union Minister of State Suresh Gopi featuring in the film, it has been denied clearance. *—PTI*

PHOTO: XXX

7-yr-old girl raped in UP; accused held

MUZAFFARNAGAR, 28 JUNE

A seven-year-old girl was reportedly raped in Budhana town, in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar. The incident occurred on 27 June when the accused, Raju, 35, a factory labourer, allegedly lured the girl to a secluded area. The alarming situation came to light when the girl returned home bleeding, prompting her family to seek medical assistance. Following a complaint from the victim's family, police registered a case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Raju was apprehended during an encounter and sustained bullet injuries while attempting to flee. He was receiving treatment in Budhana. Raju has allegedly confessed to the crime. *—PTI*

Doctor kept under 'digital arrest' for 8 days, loses ₹3 cr

MUMBAI, 28 JUNE

A 70-year-old doctor in Mumbai became a victim of a sophisticated cybercrime operation, losing Rs 3 crore after being falsely accused of involvement in a non-existent money laundering scam. The incident began when she received a call from an individual claiming to be from the telecom department, followed by a call from another person posing as a crime branch officer. The fraudsters presented fake documents from various probe agencies, convincing the doctor of her alleged involvement in criminal activities. For eight days, she was under "digital arrest," forced to report to the scammers hourly. Out of fear, she transferred substantial amounts to various accounts. The West Region Cyber Police launched an investigation on 5 June after the doctor reported the fraud. Authorities have since traced Rs 82 lakh transferred into cryptocurrency and are actively pursuing the culprits. *—PTI*

Telugu journalist Swecha V dies by suicide

HYDERABAD, 28 JUNE

Swecha V, a prominent 40-year-old journalist and news presenter for a Telugu channel, has reportedly died by suicide at her home in Hyderabad. Her father accused an individual of playing a role in her tragic death, prompting police to register a case of suicide. She was discovered hanging from a ceiling fan on 27 June. The news of her passing raised significant concern, prompting public figures, including BRS working president KT Rama Rao, to express their condolences. Rao underscored the importance of seeking help during difficult times, advocating mental health awareness. *—PTI*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support

Death toll in Himachal flood reaches 7

SHIMLA, 28 JUNE

The death toll in the flash flood in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra and Kullu has reached seven after the recovery a minor girl's body near the river side in Bakshahal village in Kullu. The victim, Murti Devi along with her father, Nand Lal and aunt were swept away in flash floods while trying to take away valuables from their homes at Rehla Bihal on 25 June. The father and aunt are yet to be located. Earlier, six bodies were found in a hydro-project site in Khaniyara village in Kangra. The workers were resting in temporary shelters near the site when floodwaters from Manuni Khad and nearby drains swept several of them away. *—PTI*

WB woman gangraped 'for rejecting' marriage proposal

College guard arrested, had ignored woman's pleas for help

KOLKATA, 28 JUNE

The police suspect that the law college student in Kolkata was gangraped for turning down the marriage proposal of the main accused, making him angry.

Police were also trying to ascertain if the entire crime was pre-planned or not.

Circumstantial evidence confirmed that the victim had been tortured by the prime accused for rejecting his marriage proposal, police sources said.

The woman told the three accused that she had a boyfriend and was "happy with him" and would not "cheat him".

The trio then threatened to kill her boyfriend and lodge false cases against her parents if she continued to resist the prime accused.

The medical examination corroborated the victim's allegations.

The first-year student of South Calcutta Law College was gangraped inside the institution by an alumnus and two senior students of the institution on 25 June.

All three accused were arrested. There are external injuries near her private parts and inner thighs, besides marks of assaults on and around her neck.

The police on Saturday arrested a security guard of the law college after detaining him for questioning.

According to police sources, the preliminary investigation revealed that the security guard, Pinaki Banerjee, was present at the time of the gangrape. Acting on the accused's instructions, he left his guard room, leaving the woman alone. Despite her repeated pleas for help, the guard failed to assist her, police said.

Meanwhile, the National Commission for Women wrote to West Bengal chief, directing urgent action in the case and the state police's cooperation for a meeting between a member of the rights panel and the survivor and her family. *—PTI*

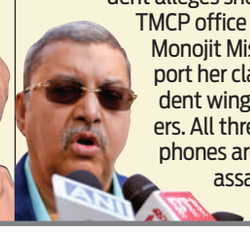
A BJP activist being detained by police personnel during a protest against gangrape of the law student in Kolkata, West Bengal on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Padma Shri monk accused of rape

A woman in West Bengal has accused Padma Shri awardee Swami Pradiptananda, also known as Kartik Maharaj, of repeatedly raping her since 2013 under the pretext of offering her a job at a school run by the Bharat Sevashram Sangha in Murshidabad. She alleged the monk promised her employment, then sexually assaulted her at the hostel and various ashram branches. She claims she was coerced into an abortion after becoming pregnant and was recently threatened when she tried to contact him again. Maharaj has denied the accusations, calling them a conspiracy to damage his reputation. The allegations come amid outrage over a separate rape case involving a law student at South Calcutta Law College, which has triggered a political row ahead of state elections.

What can be done if raped by friend: MP

Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee has come under fire for his comments on the alleged gang-rape of a 24-year-old law student at South Calcutta Law College. Reacting to the case, Banerjee said, "What can be done if a friend rapes a friend? Will police be inside schools?"—remarks the BJP has labelled "disgraceful" and dismissive of institutional responsibility. The student alleges she was lured into a guard room near the TMCP office by three men, including former student Monojit Mishra, and assaulted. Medical reports support her claims. Mishra, reportedly linked to TMC's student wing, appears in photos with senior party leaders. All three accused have been arrested, and their phones are being examined amid allegations the assault was filmed. BJP leaders accused the TMC of shielding rapists.



4,500-YEAR-OLD CIVILISATION UNEARTHED

The Archaeological Survey of India has uncovered evidence of a 4,500-year-old civilisation in Bahaj village, Deeg district, Rajasthan. Excavation, which began in 2024, revealed a 23m-deep paleo-channel linked to the mythical Saraswati River and over 800 artefacts, including pottery, Brahmi seals, copper coins, Yajna Kund, and sculptures from five periods: Harappan post-period, Mahabharata, Mauryan, Kushan, and Gupta **PHOTO: ASI**

2 UP boys kill man for iPhone to create reels

BAHRAICH, 28 JUNE

Two minors have been detained for allegedly murdering a 19-year-old man to steal his iPhone and create high-quality social media reels, police said on Saturday. The victim, Shadab, a resident of Bengaluru, was visiting his ancestral village in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich for his uncle's wedding. His body was found on 21 June near an abandoned tubewell in a guava orchard, with his throat slit and head bludgeoned with a brick.

According to police, the boys, aged 14 and 16, confessed to planning the murder four days earlier to get Shadab's iPhone. They lured him to a secluded area under the pretext of filming reels, then killed him. Police recovered the phone, the knife, and the brick used in the crime. *—PTI*

CENTRE ISSUES RULES TO EASE TREE FELLING

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

In a push to promote agroforestry and boost farmers' incomes, the Centre has issued Model Rules for Felling of Trees in Agricultural Lands. In a letter dated 19 June, the Environment Ministry urged all states to adopt the rules, which aim to remove procedural hurdles, encourage tree plantation on farms, and reduce timber imports.

The rules assign the existing State Level Committee (SLC), under the 2016 Wood-Based Industries Guidelines, to oversee the process. This committee will now also include officials from the revenue and agriculture departments. Farmers must register their land and tree details on the National Timber Management System portal, including geotagged photos of each tree. For more than 10 trees, field verification is required before a felling permit is granted. *—PTI*

DAMS ALL FILLED

Kerala rains: Orange alert in 5 districts

T'PURAM, 28 JUNE

Heavy rains lashed various parts of Kerala with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing an orange alert in five districts of the state Saturday.

The orange alert was sounded in Pathanamthitta, Kottayam, Idukki, Malappuram and Wayanad districts.

Rains in the state during the last few days raised water level in various rivers leading to flooding of low-lying areas, displacing hundreds.

It also led to opening of shutters in dams, like Banasura Sagar in Wayanad and Moozhiyar in Pathanamthitta district.

The shutters of Peechi dam in Thrissur to be opened on Saturday afternoon.

Shutters of various dams, including Kanjirapuzha, Malampuzha and Meenkara, in Palakkad were opened on Saturday following rise in their water levels due to rains in their catchment areas

The shutters of Mullaperiyar Dam in Idukki may be opened once the water level reaches 136 feet.

The district administration made arrangements to evacuate 883 families in several villages. The Mullaperiyar Dam is operated and maintained by Tamil Nadu under a 999-year lease dating back to 1886.

Kerala fears the ageing dam poses a risk, while Tamil Nadu insists on maintaining full control to ensure water supply for its agricultural needs. *—PTI*

Pedestrians look on as the water level of the Periyar river increased following heavy rains in Ernakulam of Kerala **PHOTO: PTI**

Prada finally gives Kolhapuris their due

MUMBAI, 28 JUNE

After a controversy over the use of Kolhapuri chappals in a collection, Italian luxury fashion brand Prada has acknowledged the connection, saying the design is "inspired" by the Indian handcrafted footwear.

The Italian house said that sandals featured in the men's 2026 fashion show were at the design stage. The pieces were not confirmed to be commercialised.

The Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture wrote to Prada after seeing the visuals of the footwear described as "leader sandals." It also sought exploration collaborations, compensation to the artisans and an adherence to ethical fashion practices that respect traditional knowledge and cultural rights.

Prada's group head for corporate social responsibility, Lorenzo Bertelli said that they were committed to responsible design practices, fostering cultural engagement and discussions with Indian artisan communities.

Kolhapuri Chappals have a Geographical Indication (GI) status.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had said that the particular design was commercialized without due acknowledgment, credit, or collaboration with the artisan communities.

BJP MP Dhananjay along with local artisans urged Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, to look into the violation *—PTI*

Acid applied on M'rashtra pregnant woman's abdomen

JALNA, 28 JUNE

Authorities in Maharashtra's Jalna district have launched an investigation after a pregnant woman was reportedly injured by hydrochloric acid, which was mistakenly applied to her abdomen instead of medical jelly during childbirth at a government hospital.

The incident occurred on Friday at the government rural hospital in Bhokardan, where Sheela Bhalerao, a resident of Khaparkheda village, was admitted for delivery. A nurse allegedly used hydrochloric acid, confused for medical jelly, resulting in burn injuries to Bhalerao's abdomen. Despite the serious error, she successfully gave birth to a healthy baby.

According to hospital sources, the acid used for cleaning purposes had been mistakenly placed on the medicine tray by a sanitation worker. District Civil Surgeon Dr RS Patil condemned the incident, labelling it a "serious case of negligence." *—PTI*

Capping rly waiting list at 25% unethical: Experts

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The Railway's decision to limit the passenger waiting list to 25 per cent of the capacity of each class has been flagged by reservation supervisors, ticket booking clerks and senior commercial officers as uneconomical for the railways and inconvenient for travellers.

The Ministry justified the decision, saying less than 25 per cent was capped as only one-fourth of the total waiting passengers get confirmed berths on an average.

A lot of passengers were allegedly allowed to book berths in the waiting category, with the Railways earning money on tiocket cancellation

Dilip Kumar, executive director of Information and Publicity, Railway Board stressed the Railways was more concerned about passenger comfort than monetary benefits. The Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) implemented the 25 per cent cap decision on 16 June for trains with reservation facilities. This come around two months after the ministry, through a circular, conveyed its decision on the matter.

The new measure is applicable for issuing of waitlisted tickets from remote locations and tickets booked under Tatkal scheme. It is not applicable to tickets issued on concessional fares, warrants etc. *—PTI*

CARDIAC ARREST SUSPECTED

Shefali Jariwala of 'Kaanta Laga' fame dead

MUMBAI, 28 JUNE

Actor Shefali Jariwala, best known for her iconic 2002 music video Kaanta Laga, has died aged 42. According to sources, Shefali Jariwala had been undergoing specialised treatment for the past five to six years to maintain a youthful appearance. This treatment was generally aimed at improving skin texture and promoting a more youthful look.

Jariwala was rushed to Bellevue Multispeciality Hospital in suburban Mumbai by her husband, actor Parag Tyagi on Friday night.

The opinion about her cause of death has been "reserved", police said even as some media reports claimed that Jariwala suffered a cardiac arrest.

As the cause of death is not yet clear, the Mumbai police have registered an accidental death report (ADR).

"The autopsy has been done, but the opinion on the cause of death has been reserved. Based on preliminary information, it appears to be a natural death, and there was no foul play," the official said.A host of celebrities, including playback singer Sunidhi Chauhan, Aarti Singh, Mahira Khan, Rashmi Desai and Vikas Gupta, arrived at her residence in suburban Andheri to offer their condolences to the family.

Her funeral was held at Oshiwara Hindu crematorium on Saturday evening. The last rites were performed by Jariwala's husband, father Satish Jariwala, and younger sister Shivani Jariwala.

Jariwala broke out in 2002 with the overwhelming success of 'Kaanta Laga', a remix of the classic Lata Mangeshkar song from the 1972 film "Samadhi".

In the music video, directed by filmmaker duo Vijay Sapru and Radhika Rao, Zariwala showcased bold dance moves that became the defining visual of the remix era.

In a 2020 interview with The Times of India, Jariwala recalled that she was studying engineering at Sardar Patel Engineering College in Gujarat when filmmakers Radhika Rao and Vinay Sapru spotted her outside the campus and offered her the music video.

She also revealed that her father was against the idea of her featuring in the music video.

After the success of the track, which also earned her the title of "Kaanta Laga girl", Jariwala had a cameo appearance in the 2004 hit romantic comedy 'Mujhse Shaadi Karogi, starring Salman Khan, Akshay Kumar and Priyanka Chopra Jonas.

She gained further popularity through her participation in reality shows like 'Nach Baliye', a dance-based show series, with Tyagi in 2012. *—PTI*

MIDNIGHT SUN SOCCER

Soccer players train at Nuuk Stadium in Greenland's capital. For most of the year, the island is covered in ice and snow, keeping residents indoors. But from June to August, under the 24-hour summer sun, Greenland's favourite sport takes over with people coming out to watch the match day and night. On an island of 56,000 people, about 5,500 are registered players. From youth clubs to the national team, soccer unites communities on fields ranging from turf to dirt, set against icebergs and snow-capped mountains
PHOTO: PTI

Global warming shrinks cloud cover, rising Earth's heat

At any given time, about two-thirds of Earth's surface is covered by clouds. Overall, they make the planet much cooler than it would be without them.

But as Earth gets warmer, mostly due to the rise in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere from humans burning fossil fuels, clouds are changing too. And that might already be causing more warming – adding to the greenhouse heat boost, and changing clouds even more.

Over the past few years, the world's average temperature has increased more than climate scientists were expecting. In our latest research, led by NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, we show that changes in clouds have made a significant contribution to turning up the thermostat.

- Highly reflective clouds are on the decline in a region near the equator called the intertropical convergence zone, and also two other bands called the storm tracks, which lie between 30 and 40 degrees of latitude.

Clouds and climate

Clouds help to keep Earth cool by reflecting sunlight back out to space before it can reach the ground. But not all clouds are equal.

Shiny, white clouds reflect away more sunlight – especially when they are closer to the equator, in the parts of Earth that receive the most sun. Grey, broken clouds reflect less sunlight, as do clouds closer to the poles where less light falls.

Research published last year showed that Earth has been absorbing more sunlight than the greenhouse effect alone can explain. Clouds were involved, but it wasn't clear exactly how.

Bright cloud zones are shrinking

Our new study shows what is happening. The areas covered by highly reflective clouds are shrinking. At the same time, the areas containing broken, less reflective clouds are growing.

The net effect is that additional energy from sunlight is reaching Earth's surface. Here it is absorbed, leading to extra heating.

We also looked at the effect of changes in the properties of the highly reflective clouds, caused by things such as changes in the amount of aerosol pollution in the atmosphere. However, we found these effects are much smaller than the effect of the change in area.

The global picture

In the big picture, Earth's wind patterns are driven by hot air rising near the equator and the rotation of the planet. This creates huge, looping currents of atmospheric circulation around the globe.

Local weather systems – the kind that determine the location and type of clouds – depend on these major, large-scale wind systems. The major circulation patterns in the atmosphere are changing as a result of global warming.

We found much of the cloud action is taking place at the edges of these major wind systems.

Highly reflective clouds are on the decline in a region near the equator called the intertropical convergence zone, and also two other bands called the storm tracks, which lie between 30 and 40 degrees of latitude.

At the same time the subtropical trade-wind regions, home to ever-present but less reflective broken clouds, are expanding.

A feedback loop

In short, the global warming induced by increased greenhouse gases changes the major wind systems on Earth. This in turn reduces the area of highly reflective clouds, leading to additional warming.

Warming changes wind patterns, which changes cloud patterns, which results in more warming. This is what we call "positive feedback" in the climate system: warming leads to more warming.

We still have a lot to learn about the details of this feedback loop. Our research will use ongoing satellite-based observations of clouds and how much energy Earth receives and radiates back out to space
—PTI

SALAR

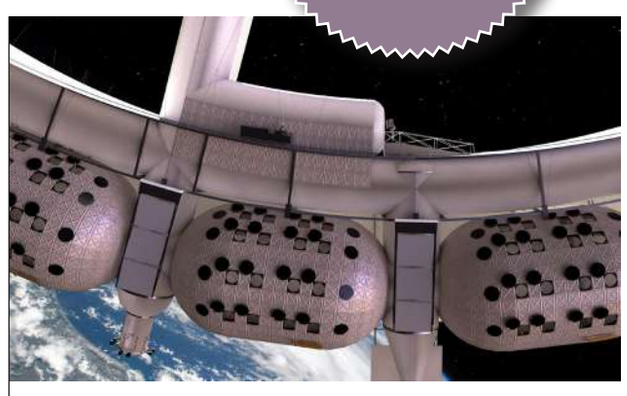
NOW, VACATION BEYOND THE CLOUDS IN SPACE

The outer space will now house the world's first commercial space hotel – Voyager Station. The hotel offers a luxurious vacation in space. Developed by Space Development Corporation, it is set to begin construction in 2026, with an expected opening in 2027.

Cost: $50 billion (approx)

DESIGN FEATURES

- Will be built 500-600 km above Earth.
- Designed as a giant rotating wheel.
- The rotation will simulate artificial Moon-like gravity (as powerful as one-sixth of the Earth's).
- It will prevent muscle atrophy.
- Design is inspired by German rocket scientist – Wernher von Braun.
- In future, stronger gravity such as of Mars or Earth, is expected.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

- After leaving Earth, guests will arrive at a zero-gravity docking hub.
- Elevator shafts will transport them to 'habitation modules'.
- These modules are placed around the station's circumference.
- SpaceX Starship or Blue Origin rockets might be used for shuttling people to and from.
- 280 guests and 112 crew can be accommodated.
- $5 million cost for three-and-a-half-day stay excluding transportation cost.

LUXURY IN SPACE

The amenities available are:

- Luxury suites and villas with Earth's views.
- Zero-gravity sports.
- Spas and gym.
- Cinema complex and concert hall.
- Bar and restaurants.

The Voyager will expand the size of space economy to
$2.4 TRILLION BY 2040

ENGINEERED FOR SELF-SUSTENANCE:

- Solar panels will convert sunlight into electricity, powering the entire project.
- Hydroponic gardens will provide fresh, climate-controlled food. Oxygen from photosynthesis to be used and wastewater will be recycled.
- The Voyager will have support and radiation shielding to protect residents from space radiation.

Research: Saariyah Iram, Design: G. Vishwanatha

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Meet the Dehradun firm that armed 'Game of Thrones', 'The Hobbit'

Tucked away in a quiet lane of this serene hill town lies an unlikely powerhouse behind some of Hollywood's grandest fantasy worlds. From the blood-soaked battles of 'Game of Thrones' to the mythical realms of 'The Hobbit' and 'Assassin's Creed', it is here that swords clanged, chainmail glinted, and fantasy found form — courtesy of Lord of Battles, a little-known Indian company that has become a trusted name in global epic cinema.

This artisan-led business, founded by Captain Saurabh Mahajan, a former officer of the Indian Army's 6 Lancers Regiment, has grown from a one-man passion project into an international name in armoury and prop-making.

The company began not with fanfare, but with a chance meeting. "I was at a river rafting camp when I met Jenni Tribe, an Australian woman who asked if I could supply handcrafted items for a theatre production," recalls Mahajan. At the time, he had no business, no workshop – just Rs 4-5 lakh in savings and a passion for history. He took the order seriously, scrambling to meet the deadline with quality craftsmanship. That first delivery became his launchpad.

Soon after, Mahajan's work caught the eye of the prestigious Royal Shakespeare Company. For their 2010 production of 'Morte d'Arthur', his small team created chainmail, helmets, and medieval accessories. Word spread, and so did the demand.

By 2014, Captain Saurabh Mahajan had his biggest break, an order for Season 4 of 'Game of Thrones'
PHOTO: SCREENGRAB/PTI

By 2014, Mahajan had his biggest break yet, an order for Season 4 of 'Game of Thrones'. "It was massive – armour, shields, helmets, medieval clothing, and more. The team had nearly eight months to deliver, and every item had to be not just visually striking but fully functional," he said. That project cemented 'Lord of Battles'' place in the fantasy genre, with Season 5 following soon after.

The now 50-year-old entrepreneur began with three craftspersons. Today, over 200 artisans work under his leadership, handcrafting each piece using traditional techniques of hammering, shaping, and stitching. Their tools may be old, but their reach is global.

Post-'Game of Thrones', Lord of Battles became a go-to for historical and fantasy productions. Their work has appeared in BBC's 'Merlin', Netflix's 'Outlaw King', and recently, HBO's 'House of the Dragon'. Inside the workshop, the clang of metal, the scent of leather, and walls adorned with film posters offer a cinematic preview of the magic created here.

Though headquartered in Dehradun, the company now operates manufacturing units in Saharanpur, Aligarh, and Moradabad. It also runs offices in the United States and Spain under the brands Mythrojan and MedieWorld Europe. Mahajan even acquired US-based replica brand House of Warfare, further strengthening their global presence.

In one standout deal, 'Lord of Battles' secured a $3.5 million contract for two seasons of 'Game of Thrones'. But for Mahajan, the most memorable moment remains his very first paycheck of $1,500. "I went to the bank twice just to make sure the money had arrived," he laughs. "Every rupee counted back then."

Despite the fame, many of their projects still arrive wrapped in secrecy. "We often don't know the name of the project. Just numbers — 300 swords, 200 daggers, 150 chainmail shirts — and the rest is a mystery until we see the trailer or the movie," Mahajan said.

That reveal is often emotional. "We went to PVR to watch one of the films we worked on. As scenes played out, the artisans were pointing – 'I made that!', 'That took extra time', 'I had to redo that piece four times. Watching their pride was incredibly special," he added.

While deeply rooted in traditional craft, Mahajan is also looking ahead. He has established Mythrojan Global Inc. in the US to lead innovation in 3D printing and AI-driven design. Yet, he remains committed to heritage. "Traditional craftsmanship won't go out of style," he asserts.

As for Bollywood? "Not yet," Mahajan smiles, echoing the iconic 'Game of Thrones' phrase, "Winter is coming." But he's more than ready. "I'd love to be part of a thoughtfully crafted Indian historical film, something grand, maybe a Mughal-era epic with the scale of 'Game of Thrones'. For me, it's not about doing more. I'd rather take on fewer projects and execute them to perfection."

From an Army officer with a historical hobby to a global prop-maker shaping the swords and shields of fantasy cinema, Mahajan's journey, like the heroes he outfits, is forged in fire, discipline, and passion.
—PTI

PHOTO: X

Bezos, Lauren Sanchez tie the knot in Italy

VENICE, 28 JUNE

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and former TV journalist Lauren Sanchez on 27 June embarked on the new chapter of their lives as Mr and Mrs. The couple tied the knot at a grand affair in Venice, Italy. Bill Gates, Kim Kardashian, Kris Jenner, Karlie Kloss, Ivanka Trump and Orlando Bloom were among the many guests. The ceremony reportedly kicked off with a performance of 'Can't Help Falling in Love' by Elvis Presley, sung by Matteo Bocelli. The couple had planned to hold their wedding ceremony on Saturday, at Scuola Grande della Misericordia, but made a last-minute location change due to security concerns amid ongoing protests over the wedding by groups.
—ANI

China plane makes emergency landing due to glitch

BEIJING, 28 JUNE

A Shandong Airlines domestic flight was forced to make an emergency landing on Friday after encountering an "aircraft malfunction." Passengers reported loud noises and an unpleasant smell inside the cabin. Flight SC4667, travelling from Qingdao to Shanghai, was diverted to an airport in Nanjing after the crew followed safety procedures, the airline announced on social media. All passengers were accommodated appropriately, with another aircraft sent to continue subsequent flights. One passenger claimed on social media that something was ingested by the left engine during cruising, describing the experience as "terrifying." They noted several loud bangs and a shaking sensation, alongside a burnt smell that lasted for several minutes.
—PTI

13 soldiers killed in suicide attack in Pak's Khyber

PESHAWAR, 28 JUNE

A tragic day unfolded in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, as a suicide attack claimed the lives of 13 security personnel and injured 24 others early this morning. A suicide bomber targeted a Bomb Disposal Unit vehicle in the Khaddi area of North Waziristan, sending shockwaves through the region. Among the injured, 14 were civilians, including women and children, with several reported in critical condition. Meanwhile, a mortar shell exploded in Kachhi Kamar village, injuring 14 individuals, including five children aged between 5-11. These incidents raised significant concerns regarding the deteriorating security situation, with militant group Usud al-Harb claiming responsibility for the suicide attack.
—PTI

15 killed, 40 injured in storms in Pak's Punjab

LAHORE, 28 JUNE

At least 15 people, including eight children, have died and 40 others were injured in rain-related incidents over the past three days in Punjab province, Pakistan, officials said on Saturday. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) reported that most fatalities occurred due to wall and roof collapses in districts including Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, and Gujrat. Following a prolonged heatwave, the pre-monsoon rains have brought relief but also danger. The PDMA has advised residents to avoid non-essential travel, stay indoors during storms, and keep children away from water drains and exposed electrical infrastructure. The current spell is expected to last until 1 July, with Punjab forecast to receive 25 per cent more rainfall than usual this monsoon season.*—PTI*

Mourners attend the funeral ceremony of the Iranian armed forces generals, nuclear scientists and their family members who were killed in Israeli strikes, at Islamic Revolution Square, in Tehran, on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Trump tells Iran 'you got beat to hell'

Iran asks US to 'check tone' for nuke talks

WASHINGTON, 27 JUNE

President Donald Trump on Friday scoffed at Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's heated warning to the US not to launch future strikes on Iran, as well as the Iranian Supreme Leader's assertion that Tehran "won the war" with Israel.

Trump, in remarks to reporters and later in an extended statement on social media, said the comments defied reality after 12 days of war.

"Look, you're a man of great faith. A man who's highly respected in his country. You have to tell the truth," Trump said of Khamenei. "You got beat to hell."

Trump was responding to Khamenei's assertion that Tehran had delivered a "slap to America's face" by striking a US air base in Qatar and warned against further attacks by the US or Israel.

In a social media post Friday, Trump also appeared to refer to a plan presented to the White House by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government in the first days of the Israel-Iran conflict to try to kill Khamenei. Trump vetoed that plan, according to a US official.

"His Country was decimated, his three evil Nuclear Sites were OBLITERATED, and I knew EXACTLY where he was sheltered, and would not let Israel, or the US Armed Forces, by far the Greatest and Most Powerful in the World, terminate his life," Trump posted on Truth Social. "I SAVED HIM FROM A VERY UGLY AND IGNOMINIOUS DEATH, and he does not have to say, 'THANK YOU, PRESIDENT TRUMP!'"

Trump expressed confidence that Iran's nuclear ambition has faded.

"Can I tell you, they're exhausted. And Israel's exhausted, too," Trump said. He added, "The last thing they're thinking right now is nuclear."

White House officials have said they expect to restart talks soon with Iran, though nothing has been scheduled.

However, Iranian Foreign Minister, Seyed Abbas Araghchi, said that Trump should put aside the "disrespectful tone" towards Khamenei if the US wants to have a deal with Iran.

"If President Trump is genuine about wanting a deal, he should put aside the disrespectful and unacceptable tone towards Khamenei, and stop hurting his millions of heartfelt followers," he said.
—PTI/ANI

Iran-backed Houthis fire missiles at Israel

The IDF stated that sirens have been sounded in southern Israel after projectile fire was detected from Yemen. The military said the ballistic missile launched at Israel by the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen was likely intercepted by air defences, The Times of Israel reported. The IDF said the attempts to shoot down the missile were apparently successful. There were no reports regarding injuries or impacts.

Why would the so-called 'Supreme Leader,' Ayatollah Ali Khamenei say so blatantly and foolishly that he won the war with Israel, when he knows his statement is a lie?.... Iran has to get back into the World Order flow, or things will only get worse for them

—Donald Trump, US President

The great and powerful Iranian people, who showed the world that the Israeli regime had no choice but to run to 'daddy' to avoid being flattened by our missiles, do not take kindly to threats and insults. If illusions lead to worse mistakes, Iran will not hesitate to unveil its real capabilities

—Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Iranian Foreign Minister

Relatives mourn over the bodies those killed in Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip, at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

62 killed in Gaza; Bibi says no orders given to shoot aid seekers

DEIR AL-BALAH/ JERUSALEM, 28 JUNE

- US President Donald Trump had hinted at a new ceasefire agreement within the next week. Trump had said, 'we're working on Gaza and trying to get it taken care of.'

At least 62 people were killed across Gaza by Israeli strikes, health staff say, as Palestinians face a growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza and ceasefire prospects inch closer. The attacks came as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied the repeated killings of Palestinians seeking aid.

The strikes began late Friday and continued into Saturday afternoon, among others killing 12 people at the Palestine Stadium in Gaza City, which was sheltering displaced people, and eight more living in apartments, according to staff at Shifa hospital where the bodies were brought.

US President Donald Trump had said there could be a ceasefire agreement within the next week. In the Oval Office Friday, Trump said, "we're working on Gaza and trying to get it taken care of."

An official said that Israel's Minister for Strategic Affairs, Ron Dermer, will arrive in Washington next week for talks on Gaza's ceasefire, Iran and other subjects.

Indirect talks between Israel and Hamas have been on again, off again since Israel broke the ceasefire in March.

More than 500 Palestinians have been killed and hundreds more wounded while seeking food since the newly formed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation began distributing aid in the territory about a month ago, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

However, Netanyahu and Defence Minister Israel Katz rejected claims that Israeli soldiers were ordered to shoot at Palestinians approaching aid sites inside Gaza.

They called the reports "malicious falsehoods".

The war has killed over 56,000 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry. More than half of the dead were women and children. At least 6,089 were killed since the latest ceasefire's end.
—PTI

Russia won't play West's one-sided game: Putin

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel at the Eurasian Economic Forum in Minsk, Belarus on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

MINSK/KYIV, 28 JUNE

Russia will no longer engage in "one-sided" games with the West, President Vladimir Putin stated while addressing journalists on the sidelines of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) summit in Minsk, Russian Today (RT) reported.

Putin said that Western nations have repeatedly betrayed Russia by not honouring their promises regarding NATO expansion. He claimed that NATO is using alleged Russian "aggressiveness" to justify plans to increase defence spending to 5 per cent of member states' GDP and bolster military presence in Europe.

"They (The West) are turning everything upside down," Putin said on Friday. "No one is saying a word about how we've come up to the Russian special military operation."

He asserted that the Ukraine conflict's origins date back decades, when Moscow was "blatantly lied to" about NATO's intentions.

"Everything was good as long as it was against Russia.... No one has wished to pay attention to the Islamic State, as long as it operates against Russia. Explosions in Moscow, and all that," he said.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy emphasised the need to impose restrictions on the supply of artificial intelligence suitable for military use to Russia.

The leaders' comments come as Russian drones killed two and injured at least 17 more in the southern Ukrainian authorities said.
—ANI/PTI

Trump ends talks with Canada over its tax on tech firms

WASHINGTON, 28 JUNE

President Donald Trump said Friday that the US is suspending trade talks with Canada over its plans to continue with its tax on technology firms, which he called "a direct and blatant attack on our country."

Trump, in a post on his Truth Social, said Canada had informed the US that it was sticking to its plan to impose the digital services tax, which applies to Canadian and foreign businesses that engage with online users in Canada. It is set to go into effect Monday.

"Based on this egregious tax, we are hereby terminating ALL discussions on Trade with Canada, effective immediately. We will let Canada know the tariff that they will be paying to do business with the US within the next seven day period," Trump said.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Friday that his country would "continue to conduct these complex negotiations in the best interests of Canadians. It's a negotiation."

Trump later said he expects that Canada will remove the tax.

"Economically we have such power over Canada. We'd rather not use it," Trump said in the Oval Office. "It's not going to work out well for Canada. They were foolish to do it."

The digital services tax will hit companies including Amazon, Google, Meta, Uber and Airbnb with a 3 per cent levy on revenue from Canadian users. It will apply retroactively, leaving US companies with a USD 2 billion US bill due at the end of the month.
—PTI

Virginia varsity Prez resigns under pressure

The President of the University of Virginia is resigning his position under pressure from the Justice Department, which had pushed for his departure amid scrutiny of the school's diversity, equity and inclusion practices, a person familiar with the matter said Friday.

Appeals court returns peace org to Trump

A federal appeals court panel on Friday stayed a lower court ruling that blocked the Trump administration from moving forward with dismantling the US Institute of Peace, an organisation taken over in March by the Department of Government Efficiency.

3 prosecutors involved in 6 Jan riot case fired

The Justice Department on Friday fired at least three prosecutors involved in US Capitol riot criminal cases, the latest moves by the Trump administration targeting attorneys connected to the massive prosecution of the 6 January, 2021, attack, according to sources.

Man pleads not guilty to hate crimes in Colorado attack

DENVER, 27 JUNE

A man accused of hurling Molotov cocktails at a group of people who were demonstrating in Boulder, Colorado, in support of Israeli hostages pleaded not guilty Friday to federal hate crime charges.

Mohamed Sabry Soliman was indicted earlier this week on 12 hate crime counts in the 1 June attack. He is accused of trying to kill eight people who were hurt by the Molotov cocktails and others who were nearby.

Soliman's attorney, David Kraut, entered the not guilty plea on Soliman's behalf during a quick hearing.

Investigators say Soliman told them he intended to kill the roughly 20 participants at the weekly demonstration on Boulder's Pearl Street pedestrian mall. But he threw just two of his over two dozen Molotov cocktails while yelling "Free Palestine."

Federal authorities say Soliman, an Egyptian national, has been living in the US illegally with his family. Prosecutors say the victims were targeted because of their perceived or actual national origin.
—PTI

A MINUTE TO BREATHE

Sudan's military accepts weeklong ceasefire

CAIRO/WASHINGTON, 28 JUNE

Sudan's military agreed to a proposal from the United Nations for a weeklong ceasefire in El Fasher to facilitate UN aid efforts to the area, the army said Friday.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres called Sudanese military leader Gen Abdel-Fattah Burhan and asked him for the humanitarian truce in El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur province, to allow aid delivery.

Burhan agreed to the proposal, but it's unknown whether the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces would agree and comply with the ceasefire.

"We are making contacts with both sides with that objective, and that was the fundamental reason for that phone contact. We have a dramatic situation in El Fasher," Guterres told reporters on Friday.

Sudan's SAF accepted UN's humanitarian ceasefire proposal **PHOTO: X**

No further details were revealed about the specifics of the ceasefire, including when it could go into effect.

Sudan plunged into war in April 2023 when simmering tensions between the Sudanese army and the rival RSF escalated into battles in the capital, Khartoum, and spread across the country, killing more than 20,000 people.

The war has also driven more than 14 million people from their homes and pushed parts of the country into famine. UNICEF said earlier this year that an estimated 61,800 children have been internally displaced since the war began.

El-Fasher, more than 800km southwest of Khartoum, is under the control of the military. The RSF has been trying to capture El Fasher for a year.

The ceasefire comes a as the Congo and Rwanda on Friday signed a peace deal facilitated by the US to help end the decades-long deadly fighting in eastern Congo, while allowing the US government and American companies gain access to critical minerals in the region.
—PTI

Protesters demanding Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra resignation in Bangkok on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

PROTESTERS DEMAND BANGKOK PM'S RESIGNATION OVER LEAKED CALLS

BANGKOK, 28 JUNE

Hundreds of protesters took to the streets of Thailand's capital on Saturday, demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra amid escalating political unrest triggered by a leaked phone conversation with former Cambodian prime minister Hun Sen.

She is facing mounting backlash over her handling of the recent border dispute.

Demonstrators, waving national flags and carrying placards, occupied areas around the Victory Monument in central Bangkok.

A stage was set up for speakers urging the crowd to show their patriotism in light of the intensified border tensions.

Many prominent figures at the protest are associated with the "Yellow Shirts," known for their allegiance to the Thai monarchy and their opposition to Paetongtarn's father, former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra.
—PTI

PHOTO: X

Govt revises norms for biomass programme

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has issued revised guidelines under Phase-I of the National Bioenergy Programme (2021–26) to boost cleaner energy and simplify processes, particularly for MSMEs. Key changes include reduced paperwork, removal of mandatory long-term contracts, and simplified inspections. IoT-based monitoring is now encouraged over expensive SCADA systems. Financial assistance will be performance-based, with full aid for projects operating above 80 per cent capacity and pro-rata support for those below. Inspection hours have been cut from 16 to 10 per day. Developers in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, and NCR areas can choose between MNRE or CPCB schemes to address stubble burning. *—PTI*

Prestige Group, Arihant partner for ₹1.6K cr project

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

Prestige Group and Arihant Foundations and Housing Ltd will jointly develop a 3.5-acre residential project in Chennai with a revenue potential of more than Rs 1,600 crore. According to a regulatory filing, Prestige Estates Projects Ltd and Arihant Foundations and Housing Ltd have formed a joint venture to buy 3.48-acre land in Velachery, Chennai from Rane (Madras) Ltd. The acquisition will be undertaken through JV entity Canopy Living LLP. On Friday, Rane Ltd informed that it has sold a 3.48-acre land parcel in Velachery, Chennai to the JV firm for Rs 361 crore. Bengaluru-based Prestige Group has delivered 302 projects spanning 193 million square feet and has a pipeline of 130 projects across 203 million square feet. *—PTI*

Nike moves from China to reduce US tariffs impact

WASHINGTON, 28 JUNE

Nike shares surged Friday as it announced a shift of some production away from China to reduce exposure to US tariffs. The company warned, however, that tariffs imposed under the Trump administration could cost around USD 1 billion, prompting "surgical" price rises in the US starting this autumn. China currently accounts for 16 per cent of Nike's US footwear imports, which will drop to high-single digits by fiscal 2026. Walmart, too, has cautioned about price hikes during the back-to-school season due to tariffs. Despite a quarterly profit of USD 211 million and revenue of USD 11.1 billion, Nike faces slowing consumer demand and backlash against US brands, particularly in China. *—PTI*

Dubai to get Grand Continent's 1st overseas hotel

CHENNAI, 28 JUNE

Hospitality service provider Grand Continent Hotels and Resorts Ltd is set to make its first overseas expansion with the launch of a hotel in Dubai, a top official said here on Saturday. The Bengaluru-headquartered company has drawn up plans to open 4 more hotels in the country as it targets to operate 5,000 hotels by 2028, Grand Continent Hotels and Resorts Chairman and Managing Director Ramesh Shiva said."It is a 125-room facility. It is our first international property. We will be launching it in three months in Dubai," he told reporters. Each room measuring 28 sq mts to 48 sq mts would be targeting travellers of both business and leisure. It is equipped with a rooftop swimming pool, multi-cuisine restaurant, unwind bar, state-of-the-art boardroom among others. *—PTI*

Foreign investors invest over ₹13,000 cr in markets

FPI turnaround comes amid rising geopolitical tensions

MUMBAI, 28 JUNE

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) made a net investment of Rs 13,107.54 crore into Indian markets during the week of 23 June to 27 June, according to data released by the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL).

The inflow reflects strong investor confidence in Indian equities.

The data showed that FPIs made heavy investments in the Indian equity market, especially on Monday and Friday, indicating a positive shift in sentiment. With these fresh inflows, the total net investment by foreign investors in the month of June has now reached Rs 8,915 crore.

This turnaround in foreign investor activity comes after geopolitical tensions between the US, Iran, and Israel eased in recent days. The easing of tensions has improved global market sentiment, encouraging foreign investors to look at emerging markets like India more positively.

The inflow reflects strong investor confidence in Indian equities

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently cut interest rates by 50 basis points in its latest Monetary Policy Committee meeting, which is expected to boost economic growth. Moreover, inflation in the Indian economy remains at a low level, further strengthening investor confidence.

The combination of global stability, policy support, and strong macroeconomic indicators has made India an attractive destination for foreign investment at this time.

On the domestic front, important drivers will be macroeconomic indicators, institutional buying support, and sector-specific triggers such as monsoon progress, consumption trends, and infrastructure push. These elements are expected to determine stock specific movements and FPI behaviour in short term.

Earlier in May, net FPI inflows remained in positive and stood at Rs 19,860 crore, making May the best-performing month so far this year in terms of foreign investment.

Previous months' data also showed FPIs had sold stocks worth Rs 3,973 crore in March. In January and February, they had sold equities worth Rs 78,027 crore and Rs 34,574 crore, respectively. *—ANI*

With the latest payments, Bangladesh has paid nearly USD 1.5 billion of the roughly USD 2 billion total billed amount PHOTO: X

Bangladesh pays $384M power dues to Adani

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Bangladesh paid USD 384 million to Adani Power in June, significantly reducing its outstanding dues under a power supply agreement with the Indian firm, according to sources.

In June, Bangladesh has paid USD 384 million of the committed USD 437 million to be paid during the month, two sources aware of the matter said.

This would clear Bangladesh's "admitted" claims till 31 March.

With this, Adani's "claimed" dues, while still substantial, will come down to around USD 500 million, they said.

Bangladesh has struggled to meet its payment obligations under the 2017 deal, as rising import costs following the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022 and domestic political turmoil - which led to the ouster of prime minister Sheikh Hasina - strained the country's finances.

As a result, Adani had halved supply last year and full supplies were resumed in March 2025 after the country's monthly payments started covering some of the dues.

With the latest payments, Bangladesh has paid nearly USD 1.5 billion of the roughly USD 2 billion total billed amount.

Adani has reportedly agreed to waive late payment surcharge for January-June period, amounting to about USD 20 million, if Bangladesh keeps its payment commitment.

Sources said both parties are engaged in discussion to resolve some issues related to coal cost and plant capacity calculations. These are the key reasons behind the difference between "claimed" and "admitted" dues.

When contacted, an Adani Power spokesperson confirmed the payments but didn't share details on "claimed" and "agreed" dues stating these discussions are private. *—PTI*

Starlink gets final nod, awaits trial

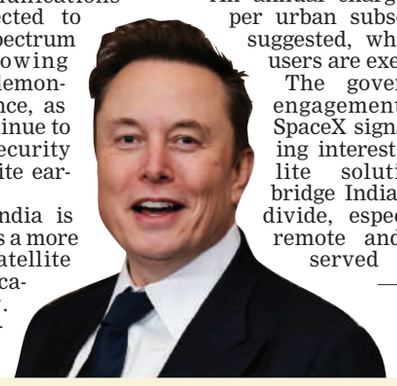
BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

Elon Musk's Starlink is on the brink of launching satellite communication services in India, with the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) issuing a draft operational authorisation. Once signed and countersigned, this document will allow Starlink to move ahead with its rollout.

The company, which secured its Global Mobile Personal Communication by Satellite licence last month, now joins Eutelsat OneWeb and Jio Satellite in receiving regulatory approval to offer satellite-based internet services. However, before commercial operations can begin, Starlink must establish ground infrastructure—earth stations, gateways, and monitoring centres—within Indian borders.

Crucially, Starlink must also pass stringent security clearances. This includes demonstrating that all data traffic is routed through Indian gateways and complies with local surveillance and geofencing protocols. Concerns were previously raised about unauthorised use of Starlink terminals in sensitive regions like the Northeast, prompting closer scrutiny from Ministry of Home Affairs. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) is expected to allocate trial spectrum soon, allowing Starlink to demonstrate compliance, as rival firms continue to await final security approvals despite earlier licences.

India is moving towards a more structured satellite spectrum allocation policy PHOTO: X



Meanwhile, India is moving towards a more structured satellite spectrum allocation policy. TRAI has proposed administrative allocation for five years, with a 4 per cent AGR fee.

An annual charge of 500 per urban subscriber is suggested, while rural users are exempt.

The government's engagement with SpaceX signals growing interest in satellite solutions to bridge India's digital divide, especially in remote and underserved regions. *—Agencies*

Juniper Energy, Foodlink F&B file IPO papers

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Renewable power producer Juniper Green Energy has submitted preliminary papers to the capital markets regulator Sebi to raise Rs 3,000 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). This will consist entirely of a fresh issuance of equity shares, with no offer-for-sale component. The company also aims to secure Rs 600 crore in a pre-IPO round. Proceeds will fund investments in subsidiaries and debt repayment.

In a separate development, Foodlink F&B Holdings, a luxury catering and food retail chain, has filed its own IPO papers with Sebi, seeking to raise funds through a combination of fresh equity worth up to Rs 160 crore and an offer for sale of over 1.19 crore shares by existing shareholders.

The proceeds will be used for setting up new kitchens, expanding dining venues, and for debt repayment.

Both companies plan to list their shares on the BSE and NSE. *—PTI*

Pvt consumption hits 20-yr high: Fin Ministry

Share of private consumption in nominal GDP increased from 60.2 per cent in FY24 to 61.4 per cent in FY25 PHOTO: X

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

India's private consumption has shown strong growth, reaching the highest share in the country's GDP in the past two decades, according to the latest monthly report released by the Ministry of Finance.

The report highlighted that the share of private consumption in nominal GDP increased from 60.2 per cent in FY24 to 61.4 per cent in FY25.

This marks the second-highest level in the last 20 years, indicating sustained strength in consumption demand across the country.

The Ministry said that private final consumption expenditure grew at a faster pace of 7.2 per cent in FY25. This improvement was largely supported by a rebound in rural demand.

In nominal terms, GFCF accounted for 29.9 per cent of GDP, which is lower than the last two years but still higher than the pre-pandemic average of 28.6 per cent during FY16 to FY20.

The report also pointed out a positive shift in the country's external trade. Exports, measured at constant 2011-12 prices, rose by 6.3 per cent in FY25, a notable improvement from the 2.2 per cent growth in FY24.

On the other hand, imports declined by 3.7 per cent in FY25, in contrast to a strong 13.8 per cent growth seen in the previous year.

The fall in imports further supported the overall net exports, contributing positively to economic growth.

The Ministry's report highlighted the balanced nature of India's growth drivers, with consumption, investment, and exports all playing vital roles. *—ANI*

- The Ministry said that private final consumption expenditure grew at a faster pace of 7.2 per cent in FY25. This improvement was largely supported by a rebound in rural demand.

Credit growth driven by economic activity: Report

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

A report from Standard Chartered reveals that credit growth is primarily influenced by overall economic activity rather than mere liquidity surplus. While high liquidity might support unsecured personal loans, it does not guarantee general credit expansion.

The report highlights that real demand for credit is closely tied to economic performance. In contrast, credit—including personal loans—tends to slow during periods of excess liquidity, with the central bank often increasing liquidity in response to sluggish economic activity. Data from 2016 to 2017 showed a decline in credit as a percentage of GDP despite high liquidity. Conversely, unsecured personal loan growth has surged, doubling to approximately 6 per cent of GDP, propelled by improved access to credit & digital lending. *—PTI*

Tata Steel aims at achieving 20% diverse workforce by 2028

JAMSHEDPUR, 28 JUNE

Celebrating a decade of its MOSAIC diversity and inclusion initiative, Tata Steel announced its objective to achieve a 20 per cent diverse workforce across the group by 2028.

The company aims to challenge norms in traditionally male-dominated industries, highlighting its comprehensive HR policies that encompass equal benefits for LGBTQIA+ partners, gender-neutral parental leaves, and support for gender transition among others.

Launched in 2015, MOSAIC focuses on making inclusion a tangible experience within the organisation, particularly during Pride Month. The initiative encompasses five strategic pillars—recruitment, sensitisation, retention and development, infrastructure, and celebration.

The initiative encompasses five strategic pillars—recruitment, sensitisation, retention and development, infrastructure, and celebration PHOTO: PTI

Atrayee Sanyal, Chief People Officer, stated, "Tata Steel has been a pioneer in people-centric HR policies, consistently evolving to foster an equitable and inclusive workplace."

Significant achievements since the initiative's inception include scholarships for women, integration of transgender operators, and the establishment of an all-women mining shift in Noamundi. *—PTI*

INFRA PUSH FOR MSMEs

Plug-and-Play industrial parks must boost manufacturing: Report

The report is based on a proprietary survey with 94 senior decision-makers across India's manufacturing and logistics sectors, capturing a mix of perspectives from large enterprises and MSMEs PHOTO: X

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Developing industrial parks with plug-and-play facilities at fast pace, further reduction in logistics cost and skilling are essential for enhancing manufacturing activities in India, according to Cushman & Wakefield.

Real estate consultant Cushman & Wakefield has come out with a report, "Elevating India's Manufacturing Resilience: Charting the Path to Self-Reliance."

The report is based on a proprietary survey with 94 senior decision-makers across India's manufacturing and logistics sectors, capturing a mix of perspectives from large enterprises and MSMEs.

"India's manufacturing sector is undergoing a structural shift. Our findings indicate a strong alignment between infrastructure investment, policy clarity, and industry intent," said Gautam Saraf, Executive Managing Director, Mumbai & New Business, Cushman & Wakefield.

According to the survey, he said 88 per cent of manufacturers are scaling up due to infrastructure-led confidence, and over 95 per cent report improved logistics access through government-backed programmes.

- The report identifies four core challenges threatening India's ability to sustain manufacturing growth.

The report identifies four core challenges threatening India's ability to sustain manufacturing growth. These four challenges are high logistics cost, warehousing capacity lagging behind global benchmarks, low value addition and skill gap. Abhishek Bhutani, Managing Director, Logistics & Industrial Services India, Head- Gujarat, Cushman & Wakefield, said India's manufacturing sector is at an inflection point, poised for accelerated growth driven by policy support and infrastructure improvements.

As companies expand into new regions, Bhutani said their success will increasingly depend on access to such turnkey ecosystems that offer integrated logistics, skilled talent, and multimodal connectivity. *—PTI*

India clubbed alongside Pak in Pool B in JMH WC

LAUSANNE, 28 JUNE

Hosts India were on Saturday clubbed alongside arch-rivals Pakistan, Chile, and Switzerland in Pool B of the expanded FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup to be co-hosted by Chennai and Madurai from November 28 till December 10 this year. The draw ceremony for the tournament was held at the FIH headquarters here, and this edition will feature 24 teams for the very first time. Pool A consists of Germany, South Africa, Canada, and Ireland, while Pool C will feature Argentina, New Zealand, Japan, and China. Spain, Belgium, Egypt, and Namibia are in Pool D, while the Netherlands, Malaysia, England, and Austria are in Pool E. Pool F will feature France, Australia, Korea, and Bangladesh.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Aitana Bonmatí hospitalised with meningitis

BARCELONA, 28 JUNE

Spain midfielder Aitana Bonmatí, the two-time Ballon d'Or holder, has been hospitalized with viral meningitis less than a week before the Women's European Championship begins. Spain coach Montse Tomé said late on Friday that her star player had felt ill and was taken to a hospital in Madrid, where she tested positive for meningitis. Spain's team is set to travel to Switzerland on Sunday for the tournament. Its first game is against Portugal on Thursday in Bern. It will also face Belgium and Italy in Group B at Euro 2025.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Dutch MotoGP: Quartararo takes pole in Netherlands

PARIS, 28 JUNE

French rider Fabio Quartararo will start from pole for the fourth time this season after posting the fastest time in qualifying on Saturday for the Dutch MotoGP. The 26-year-old 2021 world champion, who will also start from pole for the sprint race later on Saturday, has yet to transform his excellent qualifying performances this season into victories. For the Yamaha rider, it was a welcome return to form, having failed to finish in three of the last four MotoGPs.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Nikhat Zareen starts campaign with win

HYDERABAD, 28 JUNE

Two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen opened her campaign with a clinical 4:1 win over Uttar Pradesh's Rashi Sharma in the 48–51kg category on the opening day of the Elite Women's Boxing Tournament here on Saturday. Haryana's Anjali scored an upset win over World Championships bronze medallist Manisha Moun in the 57-60 kg category at Hyderabad's Saroornagar Indoor Stadium. Other notable Day 1 results included a win for 2023 world champion Nitu (Haryana) in 45–48kg over Rajani Singh (UP) 5:0, while Telangana's Yashi Sharma defeated K Monisha (Tamil Nadu) 5:0 in the 60–65kg category. —*PTI*

2 ignored pacers have lengthy practice for 2nd Test vs Eng

BIRMINGHAM, 28 JUNE

Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah's likelihood to play the second Test between India and England at Edgbaston, starting from 2 July onwards, is low, as per ESPNCricinfo. The Indian team management has already confirmed that Bumrah, owing to workload management and history of injuries, will be playing only three Tests, though the matches that these are for have not been confirmed. ESPNCricinfo has learned that Bumrah's chances of taking the field for the second Test are low. During the Leeds Test, Bumrah got a five-wicket haul in the first innings and went wicketless while defending 371 runs, delivering a total of almost 44 overs during the match.

Akash Deep And Arshdeep Singh Might Play In Birmingham

One of India's biggest problems in the opening Test was the performance of their pacers apart from Jasprit Bumrah. It has opened up the possibility of a change in the bowling attack, and thus, both Akash Deep and Arshdeep Singh could play the second Test.

If Bumrah doesn't play, one spot naturally opens up, and with Prasidh Krishna going for plenty of runs in the first game, India might drop him as well. Revsportz has also reported that both Arshdeep Singh and Akash Deep were bowling in nets, and with Prasidh absent from the session, it could be a sign of change.

As per ESPNCricinfo, India returned to the nets on Friday after travelling, with a marathon training session of around five hours. Bumrah was present at the ground, but he did not bowl or bat. The nets session was a closed door affair and the information about him possibly doing some fitness drills or bowling alone was not possible to tell.

ANDERSON -TENDULKAR TROPHY

Team India's net session in Birmingham *PHOTO: PTI*

The session was visible from a street near the venue. Mohammed Siraj had a hit with the bat before he joined Bumrah and Prasidh Krishna inside the venue.

As per ESPNCricinfo, the chances remain low that Bumrah takes the field on July 2. The pre-decided combination to play Bumrah was apparently for the first and third Tests, with a choice to be made for the fourth or fifth Test on the basis of the direction of the series. —*PTI*

Gill needs an attitude adjustment: Brad

Former Australia keeper-batter Brad Haddin believes the Indian team, led by Shubman Gill, needs an "attitude adjustment" as the visitors try to find a way out of their fielding woes in the ongoing five-Test series in England. Indian fielders, especially Yashasvi Jaiswal, dropped several catches as Gill's side lost the opening Test at Headingley by five wickets to go 0-1 down against Ben Stokes' team.

India overcomes Malaysia to regain team gold in Snooker

India had last won the gold two years ago in Iran

COLOMBO, 28 JUNE

Multiple-time world champion Pankaj Advani and Brijesh Damani dug deep as India scored a fine 3-1 win over formidable Malaysia to regain the team gold in the ACBS Asian Snooker Championship here Saturday.

For India, which last won the gold two years ago in Iran, this was their fifth gold. Having been put through the wringer in the semifinals earlier in the morning by Hong Kong-1 (3-2), the Indians sans Aditya Mehta, who suffered a neck niggle, for both the matches, came back recharged for the final. Damani, who made a sizzling 33 clearance that took the proportions of an 80-break in the decider against Hon Man Chau in the semis, seemed to carry that momentum into the title clash.

Playing the first singles, he made a gritty 52 before an unlucky red in-off ended the break abruptly against Thor Chuan Leong. Given a lifeline, Thor Chuan, winner of the Asian 6-red title three days ago, fought back in fine style, prevailing 68-58 with a run of 39, to put Malaysia ahead.

India's Brijesh Damani, coach Ashok Shandilya, Pankaj Advani, and Aditya Mehta with the trophy *PHOTO: PTI*

Advani, who lost a rare frame in the semis against Kwok Wai Fung, brushed aside Lim Kok Leong to make it one frame apiece. In the doubles, after letting Malaysia take an early 33-1 lead, Damani punished Thor Chuan's error with a brilliant frame-clinching break of 60 to put India just a win away from the title. —*PTI*

JAYASURIYA TAKES 5 WICKETS

SL beats B'desh by an innings and 78 runs in 2nd test

COLOMBO, 28 JUNE

Left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya took his 12th five-wicket haul in test cricket to lead Sri Lanka to a dominating win over Bangladesh by an innings and 78 runs in the second cricket test and a 1-0 victory in the two-match series.

The fourth day began with Bangladesh struggling on 115 for six, needing 97 more runs to force Sri Lanka to bat again. But the rest of the match lasted less than 30 minutes as Jayasuriya polished off the tail by taking three of the last four wickets at the Singhalese Sports Club.

Bangladesh was all out for 133 in its second innings, having made 247 in the first. Sri Lanka scored 458 in its first innings, dominated by a brilliant century from opener Pathum Nissanka and backed up by half-centuries from Dinesh Chandimal (93) and Kusal Mendis (84).

Litton Das (14) edged Jayasuriya to wicketkeeper Kusal Mendis with one run added to the overnight score Saturday. Jayasuriya lured Nayeem Hasan (5) for a drive, and Kusal Mendis stumped him. Jayasuriya caught Taijul Islam (6) off his bowling while off-spin bowler Tharindu Rathnayake ended the game trapping Ebadot Hossain (6) lbw.

Sri Lanka 458 (Nissanka 158, Chandimal 93, Kusal 84, Taijul 5-131) beat Bangladesh 247 (Shadman 46, Dinusha 3-22, Asitha 3-51) and 133 (Mushfiqur 26, Jayasuriya 5-56) by an innings and 78 runs. —*PTI*

FIH Pro League: Indian women's woeful run continues

BERLIN, 28 JUNE

The Indian women's hockey team on Saturday lost 0-3 against China to slump to its seventh consecutive defeat in the European leg of the FIH Pro League here, and is staring at a possible relegation from the tournament.After the defeat, India occupied the bottom place in the nine-team standings with 10 points from 15 games.

England, who are playing Germany in back-to-back matches later on Saturday and Sunday, are placed a rung above India with 11 points from 14 games.

If England wins against Germany later on Saturday, India will remain at the bottom of the standings and will be relegated from the FIH Pro League to the FIH Nations Cup.

If Germany wins on Saturday, India will need to beat China on Sunday to keep their spot in the Pro League. Chen Yang (21st minute) and Zhang Ying (26th) scored from penalty corners, while Anhul Yu (45th) found the target from a field effort for China. India made a bright start and made some good circle penetrations in the first quarter.

Indian women's hockey team on Saturday lost 0-3 against China5 *PHOTO: PTI*

Baljeet Kaur had the first real chance of the match, but her shot from the top of the circle in the third minute went wide.China got their act together soon and earned their first penalty corner a minute later, but India defended well. Veteran India goalkeeper Savita made some fine saves to deny the Chinese, including one in the 13th minute to keep out Guoting Hao's reverse hit. —*PTI*

JOINT HOLDS OFF EALA TO CAPTURE EASTBOURNE TITLE

LONDON, 28 JUNE

Australia's Maya Joint saved four match points before beating Alexandra Eala 6-4, 1-6 7-6(10) to win the Eastbourne title in a gripping final on Saturday.

Four times Eala, the first player from the Philippines to reach a WTA Tour final, was a point away from victory in the final-set tiebreak, but Joint dug deep to prevail.

The 19-year-old Joint showed tremendous resilience to stay alive, and when she earned her second match point at 11-10 made no mistake, drilling a backhand crosscourt winner. —*PTI*

Hazlewood leads Australia to three-day win over WI

BRIDGETOWN, 28 JUNE

Australia blew away the West Indies for 141 and won the first Test by 159 runs at Kensington Oval on day three. The West Indies were set a stressful 301 target to win on a tricky pitch and folded in 33.4 overs on Friday.

The chief destroyer was seamer Josh Hazlewood with 5-43 from 12 overs.

The West Indies collapsed to 86-8 inside 27 overs, but the Australians didn't mop up the last resistance until the day's last over in an extra 75 minutes. Despite the inevitable, allrounder Justin Greaves, 38 not out, and No. 10 batter Shamar Joseph, a career-best 44 with four sixes, went for broke in a team-best ninth-wicket stand of 55 runs. Australia started the day in some bother at 92-4 in its second innings, but half-centuries from Travis Head, Beau Webster, and Alex Carey hoisted them to an impressive 310 all out and a 300-run lead.

"We wanted to get 200 but felt a lot more comfortable (with 300)," captain Pat Cummins said. "We're lucky to have Josh; he presents a good seam and hits good areas. He bowled beautifully."

Australia 180 & 310 (Carey 65, Webster 63, Head 61, S Joseph 5-87) beat West Indies 190 & 141 (S Joseph 44, Hazlewood 5-43) by 159 runs. —*PTI*

Diksha and Vani in top 10 at Amundi German Masters

HAMBURG, 28 JUNE

Diksha Dagar and Vani Kapoor had a contrasting day two at the Amundi German Masters to be placed tied eighth as three out of the nine Indians cut the Green Eagle Golf Course.

Diksha played an even par round to slip from the top five while Vani played 3-under 70 to move into the top 10.

The only other Indian to cut was Avani Prashanth, who played a round of 1-over 74 to end the day tied 43rd. She made two birdies, one bogey, and one double bogey.

Tvesa Malik (74-76) missed the cut by one shot as the cut fell at 3-over, while other Indians missing out were Sneha Singh (78-75), Amandeep Drall (78-75), Hitaashee Bakshi (79-81)(and Vidhatri Urs (93-87) while Neha Tripathi retired after the first round.

Helen Briem of Germany and Elinor Sudow of Sweden shared the lead in the field. Briem had a round of 1-under 70 and a combined score of eight under par with rounds of 68-70, as did Ellinor Sudow, who also played a second round of 3-under 70 to stay in the tied lead. —*PTI*

US OPEN BADMINTON

Tanvi Sharma, Ayush Shetty progress to SFs

IOWA, 28 JUNE

Promising Indian shuttlers Tanvi Sharma and Ayush Shetty marched into the semifinals of the US Open badminton tournament with convincing wins to continue their impressive run in the Super 300 Tournament here.

The 16-year-old Tanvi wrapped up her match in 33 minutes with a fine 21-13, 21-16 victory over her higher-ranked Malaysian opponent Karupathevan Letshanaa.

Ayush also dished out an excellent performance as he got the better of junior world champion Chinese Taipei's Kuo Kuan Lin 22-20, 21-9 in straight games.

Promising Indian shuttlers Tanvi Sharma and Ayush Shetty *PHOTO: PTI*

However, the men's doubles pair of Hariharan Amsakarunan and Ruban Kumar Rethinasabapathi lost their quarterfinal match 9-21, 19-21 to Chiang Chien and Wei Wu Hsuan-yi of Chinese Taipei at Mid-America Centre on Friday.

Tanvi will take on Ukraine's Polina Buhrova in the semifinal on Saturday, while Ayush will run into top seed Chou Tien-chen of Chinese Taipei for a place in the title clash.

Polina stunned third-seeded Sung Shuo-yun of Chinese Taipei in her quarterfinal match.

Ayush will have his task cut out in the semifinal against the experienced Chen, who beat the Indian youngster at the Taipei Open. —*PTI*